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SUBJECT: Mozambique - Opposition Parties Complain of Growing FRELIMO Power

Ref: 06 Maputo 1497

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11. (SBU) SUMMARY: Emboffs called on opposition leaders in early March, while making the rounds of Mozambican contacts for the Mission's newly-arrived poloff. A common theme was resentment towards FRELIMO's increasing assertiveness and hand wringing that they were relatively powerless to do anything about it. They pointed to more prominence given the ruling party in government affairs, a plan to gerrymander the municipality of the opposition stronghold of Beira (Mozambique's second city) to weaken RENAMO, and how it was becoming harder to find (or hold) employment when linked to the opposition. End Summary.

12. (SBU) Lutero Simango, a deputy in the RENAMO-UE coalition, complained that the government tapped its resources to fly FRELIMO deputies around the country, whether for government work or politicking. His party, on the other hand, was starved for funds, which meant that most RENAMO delegates remained in the capital of Maputo rather than visiting constituents in the countryside. The mayor of Beira, Daviz Simango (Lutero's brother), at a reception several days later, told emboff that he believed press reports that the government was planning to revise boundaries in the municipality of Beira to strip off outlying suburbs known to support RENAMO, so that the city would more likely fall to FRELIMO in 2008 municipal elections. He added that he had seen none of the \$250,000 President Guebuza said had been allocated to each district in the country to fund local initiatives. Being an opposition mayor was "very hard," he lamented. (Comment: Despite his city's funding troubles because of its non-FRELIMO status, Simango remains very popular in Beira. End Comment.)

13. (SBU) Maximo Diaz, outspoken lawyer and leader of MONAMO, the "first peaceful opposition party", as he refers to it, which he founded in 1992 right after the Rome Peace Agreement ended the civil war between FRELIMO and RENAMO, told emboffs that many of President Guebuza's ideas originated with him and his advisers, without their getting any credit. Meanwhile support for MONAMO was drying up, with membership dropping to "probably no more than 2,000 members." He said he would be turning 70 years old in several weeks time and talked much more of the past than the future. Cynically, he remarked that maybe "Africa was not ready for democracy; perhaps countries had to go through the monarchy stage first."

14. (SBU) Raul Domingos, former #2 in RENAMO who founded the PDD party in 2002 and unsuccessfully ran for president in 2004 (PDD came in third, after FRELIMO and RENAMO, but garnered only about 2.5 percent of the votes), told emboffs that what most worried him was the increased prominence given to FRELIMO party cells in government institutions by President Guebuza. He reported that FRELIMO had a cell in every department of every ministry, that government organs

throughout the country follow suit, and that Guebuza was using the cells to pressure employees to belong to the party. (Comment: Party cells were important during the Samora Machel era in the 1970's and 1980's, but of not much significance under Machel's successor, President Chissano, after the government adopted a new constitution in 1990 that provided for a multi-party state. End comment.) As an example, he said that several weeks earlier the woman who had run a highly effective PDD campaign in Beira had resigned for "family and social reasons" (he showed emboffs a copy of her resignation letter). He believed that her husband, who worked in the state sector, had come under pressure because of his wife's activities and would have lost his job had she not quit. Domingos added that several PDD members in the provinces had been arrested late last year for holding a political meeting, and were only released, without any formal charges, one month later when he protested personally on their behalf.

15. (SBU) Comment: There is no question that the Guebuza administration is actively trying to increase FRELIMO's power and influence throughout Mozambique. This has been a focus of Guebuza's since he was chosen by the party to succeed Chissano back in 2002, two years before the 2004 elections. There has been a steady trickle of reports in the media of mid-to-low level opposition figures switching to FRELIMO (almost certainly because of better job prospects as party members rather than ideology) since Guebuza took office in February 2005. The opposition figures' charges track what we have heard from other sources, especially over the last year (see reftels). On March 15 and 16 the FRELIMO Central Committee is meeting in a Maputo suburb to plan for the upcoming provincial elections. Every cabinet minister and every governor, reportedly, is in attendance. We will report on the outcome of the meeting septel.

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